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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 JEDDAH 000091

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [UN](#) [UNMIK](#) [KISL](#) [YI](#) [EU](#) [KV](#) [SA](#)  
SUBJECT: OIC SYG ON KOSOVO, AMBASSADOR SWING, AND UPCOMING  
SUMMIT

REF: A. STATE 012428 B. STATE 016319 C. JEDDAH 00087

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Classified By: Tatiana C. Gfoeller for Reasons 1.4(b) and (d)

11. (C) BEGIN SUMMARY: The Consul General met with OIC  
Secretary General Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu and other OIC

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officials to deliver demarches regarding Kosovo independence (Reftels B, C) and support for Ambassador Swing's candidacy for Director General (DG) of the International Organization for Migration (IOM) (Reftel A), and to discuss the upcoming OIC Summit in Dakar. Regarding Kosovo, while fully agreeing with the USG position, Ihsanoglu stated that the European Union split on Kosovo independence and Russia's strong opposition to it had created tension among OIC member states and urged the U.S. to "push harder" for OIC member state support. On Ambassador Swing's candidacy, he acknowledged that Swing was the USG's top candidate and OIC officials stated their support for Swing's participation in the Summit. Concerning the Summit, OIC Chief of Cabinet Ambassador Shoukry Toufan highlighted review of the OIC Charter as an agenda item and noted that member states needed additional time to come to a consensus. Ihsanoglu in his remarks at the February 18 preparatory meeting identified several political issues on which the Summit agenda would focus. However, on all three issues -- and despite previous claims that the OIC's strength lies in its ability to act as a bloc -- member states appear splintered. END SUMMARY.

OIC SYG URGES U.S. TO "PUSH HARDER" FOR KOSOVO SUPPORT

12. (C) Regarding Kosovo independence, OIC Secretary General Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu stated that he and OIC member states "followed closely" the situation. When asked to encourage OIC member states to support Kosovo by the Consul General, he fully agreed with the USG position but raised concerns over the impact of the EU split on Kosovo, stating that Russia -- but not China -- influenced OIC member state opinion. He added that only 51 of the 57 OIC member states had declared their support for Kosovo's independence and called on the United States to "push harder" for OIC member state support. He particularly asked for USG pressure on Saudi Arabia in this regard. The Consul General provided him with a copy of President Bush's February 18 letter to Kosovo President Fatmir Sejdiu and assured him that she would report to Washington his request for increased U.S.-OIC member state engagement on Kosovo.

OIC SUPPORTS SWING'S PARTICIPATION IN SUMMIT, INQUIRES ABOUT

¶3. (C) On supporting Ambassador William Swing's candidacy for Director General of the International Organization for Migration (IOM), Ihsanoglu acknowledged that the U.S. government believed Swing was the best candidate and inquired whether current Director General of the IOM Brunson McKinley was running for re-election. He also requested the biography of Ambassador Swing, which Post subsequently provided. He responded favorably to Swing's participation in the Summit. Previously, OIC Director General for Political Affairs Mahdy Fathallah told the Consul General that the OIC welcomed Swing's attendance, stated that it would be mutually beneficial to the U.S. and the OIC, and recommended U.S. Embassy Dakar contact the Senegalese government to obtain an invitation for Swing.

SUMMIT AGENDA TO INCLUDE CHARTER REVIEW AND SEVERAL POLITICAL ISSUES

¶4. (C) Also present at the meeting OIC Chief of Cabinet Shoukry Toufan said that the February 18 Summit preparatory meeting focused mainly on review of the OIC Charter. When asked how the new Charter would differ from the old by the Consul General, he said that the proposed changes were technical in nature, would not create "a change in purpose," and would seek to define the OIC as a political, rather than religious organization. He added that member states continued to debate "very sensitive issues" -- such as "observer status and acceptance of new members" -- and that the OIC may need more time to come to a consensus. He also said that there was consensus that the OIC's name should be changed from Organization of the Islamic Conference to something reflecting its new reality as an organization, but hinted that coming up with a consensus new name was much harder than expected and still to be determined.

¶5. (U) Concerning political issues that may be on the agenda, Ihsanoglu stated in his February 18 remarks: "...we (the Islamic world) are still living under the strain of extremely

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difficult challenges and unprecedented threats to our faith, our dignity and security. We are in urgent need to confront all these predicaments and to devise opinions to deal with them." He also stated that the Summit would deal with "Islamophobia, globalization, combating international terrorism and disarmament," "solidarity among OIC member states," with special focus on "economic issues, oriented towards African economies" and "the questions (sic) of Muslim minorities."

COMMENT: OIC DIVISION HINDERS ABILITY TO INFLUENCE

¶6. (C) In meetings with OIC officials -- from the working-level to that of Secretary General -- all have stated that the U.S. can benefit from stronger relations with the OIC, citing the OIC's unique perspective (Islamic) as well as its global influence as one of the largest international organizations. However, the OIC's ability to present a unified front, and hence to influence, is mixed. On international issues, member state positions regarding the Gaza situation and the Danish cartoons republishing appear unanimous but on Kosovo remain splintered. Internally, member states continue to debate revision of the OIC Charter. Such divisions will make it challenging for the international community to interact with the OIC as Secretary General Ihsanoglu desires: as a powerful, and monolithic moderate Islamic bloc. END COMMENT.  
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